

## TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL WARBURTON

### RESTORING FUNDING TO CONNECTICUT CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

APPROPRIATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING, FEBRUARY 16, 2017

My name is Michael Warburton and I live in Waterbury, Connecticut. I would like to speak to the committee regarding restoration of the funding to Connecticut's five Centers for Independent Living to the level of funding that existed two years ago at 528,000.00 across the state.

Centers for Independent Living serve Connecticut's disability population across, all disabilities, all ages, all regions of our state and all life circumstances. Centers for Independent Living have been most experienced of the many partners implementing the Money Follows the Person Rebalancing Demonstration Project of the Connecticut Department of Social Services. We provide transition and housing coordination services for the thousands of participants in the Money Follows the Person Rebalancing Demonstration Project across the state. Prior to the advent of the Money Follows the Person Program, the five Centers for Independent Living have been assisting persons in skilled nursing facilities to find services, supports and housing to live in community settings at a fraction of the cost to the state's Medicaid system to serve these same individuals in costly skilled nursing facilities. The five Centers for Independent Living were the primary providers under Money Follows the Person's predecessor project, the Nursing Facilities Transition Project, under which I worked. The Center staff members who work under Money Follows the Person are the most experienced in the state in how to assist individuals in returning to the community. I, myself, have been doing this work for nearly thirteen years while another of my colleagues has been doing this work for over eight years. At Independence Northwest, we are serving a combined number of 150 individuals in various stages of the transition process with Money Follows the Person in northwest Connecticut.

Make no mistake that a cut to the funding of Centers for Independent Living is a cut to the Money Follows the Person Program. It is a program to which many individuals, their families and supporters look for support in realizing a less restrictive, more fulfilling and a less costly life outside of the walls of a skilled nursing facility and they rely on the experience, knowledge and skills of the competent transition and housing coordinators at Centers for Independent Living to assist them in the transition process.

Without the restoration of these funds, many Centers for Independent Living may no longer have the operating funds to keep the doors open and thus the state's Money Follows the Person Program will lose the many years, expertise and wealth of knowledge that the Centers provide. I ask you to assist the Centers in keeping the doors open so that Money Follows the Person may continue to serve in this vital role of assisting persons to

leave institutional settings to a more fulfilling, more independent and less costly way of life.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Michael S. Warburton